has started the construction of a road which is not yet finished, but which permits trucks to reach Deirik in all seasons. Farmers flowed into the region following the opening of the road and began populating it. The present Minister of National Economy, Munir Diab, and Mr. Amin Nazif, formerly Secretary General of the Ministry of agriculture, own lands in the region.

c. Volume of Seeds and Crops

The main dry farming crop in Jazirah is wheat with "black" barley a poor second. It is estimated that about 50-60,000 tons of wheat are planted every year and some five thousand tons of barley. The average yield of wheat is 6-7 times per unit planted which gives a yearly crop of some 350-400,000 tons, of this quantity, 85-100,000 tons are needed for local consumption and for seed. This leaves about 250-300,000 tons available for export in an average year. Calculating this quantity at the price of LS 170 in the field free of all expenses, it means a revenue of LS 51 million per year to Jazirah with seeds and provisions already accounted for or about LS 250 per capita.

d. Difficulties in the Way of Agricultural Development

Agriculture in Jazirah suffers from many obstacles and hindrances which the Government can remedy with some careful thought and planning. The difficulties connected with land ownership and tenure and with credit and transport will be discussed separately, but other obstacles will be mentioned here below:

1. There is no agricultural station in the important wheat growing centers of Jazirah to record the amount of rainfall and the mean temperatures to guide the farmers.

2. The Jazirah is subject in most years to a heat wave during the month of May which destroys 25-35% of the crop. The only remedy is to introduce strains of wheat which mature before the period of the heat wave. Although the problem and the remedy are known to the Government, no effort has yet been made either to import new

7:Lewis S-5 (ca. 1940-45) 1948 MD1 Syria MD1

175 Tamerlane's invasion and were dispersed in other parts of Syria. Of 3200 villages once on the tax rolls of the pashalik of Aleppo, only 400 were said to be inhabited when Volney visited the country in the 1780's.[10] Such peasants as remained in the west of our region suffered from misgovernment, extortion, and raiding by Arab tribes.

166 [231] 361 715 312 241 In the second half of the past century a movement of recolonization started that is still in progress. Sheep-raising Arab tribes began to settle in villages; peasants came from the districts of Hama and Homs; immigrant Circassians established four villages north of the town of Selemiya. The frontier began to move outward once more, and old foggaras were cleaned and repaired to give irrigation water once again. The strongest and most energetic immigrant group, the pioneers, were Ismaili, led back to their land of a thousand years ago by a group of powerful leaders. They settled first on the site of Selemiya itself about 1870. Today they number 14,000 or more, the majority living in the town and in villages to the east. They chose village sites where old foggaras could be brought into use, and for 75 years they have been extending the area of irrigated land by the restoration of old canals and the digging of new ones. In the last 20 years subsistence agriculture, depending largely on unirrigated grain farming, has given way before a more intensive commercial system, typified by the growing of irrigated cash crops such as seed onions and cotton on individualized holdings. The government has granted money for canal cleaning and swamp drainage. All these factors have contributed to extension of irrigation.

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312 [464] Some old canals, however, are still derelict. Some are so ruined that the cost of repair would be prohibitive. Others may yet be brought back into use, but the will to work is weaker than in the early days of colonization, and now laborers' wages and other expenses have increased. Elsewhere village boundaries cut across old canals. Landowners of the village where a canal rises are loath to let the water flow away to the lands of another village, and thus ancient foggara systems which were perfectly related to the physical environment have been partly replaced by more local schemes of surface canal and ditch irrigation. For example, the canals that rise in Moufaqqar (Fig. 3) could irrigate land and drive mills in Moufaqqar, Tell et Tout, and Selemiya, but they have been so modified that the water is used only in Moufaqqar, and some of it runs to waste. A canal which rises in Tell et Tout but which formerly flowed on to Selemiya land has been blocked, so that its water irrigates Tell et Tout land only.

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113 [10] C.-F. Volney: Travels through Egypt and Syria, in the Years 1783, 1784 & 1785, translated from the French, 2 vols., New York, 1798; reference in Vol. 2, pp. 90-91.

14:International Bank S-5 (1954) 1955 MD1 Syria MD1

To meet the cost of this program over the next five or six years the mission suggests that additional funds of £S 500,000 be made available to the forestry service.

Settlement of State Domain

The employment of state land for the establishment of peasant proprietors is already declared government policy. Article 22 of the 1950 constitution stipulates that "The State shall distribute among landless peasants, at a small cost to be paid by instalments, sufficient land to secure their livelihood"; and decrees issued by the Minister of Agriculture on November 1, 1952 and January 15, 1953, provide for the sale of government land in parcels of 50 or 10 hectares, depending on whether the land is irrigated.

The immediate need for settlement arises from certain localized population pressures and from the growing desire of the Bedouins to adopt agriculture. Population pressures are most marked in the provinces of Latakia and Djebel Druze where, according to rough estimates, the amount of cultivated land available per person is less than 50% and a little over 60% respectively, of the average for Syria as a whole. The reclaimed land in the Ghab and the Roudj should help in particular to relieve the overcrowding among the agricultural population of the Alaouit mountains in Latakia. According to the Ministry of the Interior, the Bedouins number about 150,000, half of whom, however, are said already to be engaged in some form of settled agriculture. Many Bedouins apparently tend to squat on unoccupied land which they cultivate more or less sporadically and often with extremely poor results. For them the availability of good land in such a province as the Jezireh is of paramount concern.

The mission has given special attention to the problems involved in settling reclaimed and irrigated areas and of undertaking certain experimental settlements in dry-farming regions. The government has not yet drawn up settlement plans for the Ghab and the Roudj, although this task is becoming urgent, particularly for the latter. For the settlement of the Bedouins certain initial steps have been taken. The government has set aside and divided into allotments 100,000 hectares in the Radd area of the Jezireh and is in the process of dividing another area of 50,000 hectares in the same province. Part of the first area has already been allocated to Bedouins but is being leased to large operators for three years in order to

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build up a sufficient fund to finance the actual settlement. The mission did not obtain sufficient information on these plans to appraise their soundness, but suggests that they be reviewed in the light of the considerations that should, in its opinion, govern such settlements.

The amount of land to be allocated per farm family in any settlement must depend on the yield of the land and the capacity of the cultivator to till it. The prospective yield must be such as to enable the farmer to earn a decent living without, however, being so high as to create inequities. The size of the allotment must not exceed that which the cultivator can manage with the labor of his own family and with the equipment at his disposal. For irrigated areas the appropriate allotment would be 5-10 hectares where land is good to average. In areas adjoining urban markets where intensive cultivation of vegetables is possible, the allotment could be below 5 hectares; and in areas where the soil is rather poor, more than 10 hectares may be necessary. Settlements for Bedouins in dry-farming areas should be organized on the assumption of 50 hectares per family. The mission believes, however, that it would be unwise to allocate all this land at once, since no family could be expected to cultivate such a large parcel. The initial allocation should be about 25-30 hectares, and even of this a part might be put into improved pasture instead of being cropped. The balance might then be put into a reserve which would be used for grazing and be available for allotment to farmers who show themselves especially capable, or to new families in the settlement. Such a pattern will make it easier for the Bedouin to accomplish the transition to settled agriculture, by enabling him to carry on his customary pastoral pursuits as he crops his land.

The land would have to be tilled with draft animals and the necessary supplemental tools, but a special effort must be made to provide the settler with more adequate draft animals and better equipment than are customarily employed. While the use of mechanized equipment would in general be impracticable, the mission does recommend that one dry-farming community be organized on a mechanized basis. Such a community is suggested quite frankly as an experiment to test the possibilities of mechanical cultivation by smallholders. Ideally, the necessary tractors, implements and harvesting machinery should be owned and operated cooperatively. In the beginning, however, the settlers would hardly be prepared for such cooperative action. The mission suggests therefore that the government establish the necessary machinery unit under the direction

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of a manager with experience in the operation and maintenance of mechanical equipment. In the first few years at least the services of this unit should be made available to cultivators at rates high enough to cover cost of amortization and operation. As and when the farmers acquire experience with machinery and develop a community spirit conducive to cooperative action, steps should be taken to transfer the equipment in whole or in part to cooperatives.

The government should utilize the opportunity afforded by such new settlements to raise the standard of agricultural practices above the average. A government agricultural worker or community leader should be assigned to each settlement. It cannot be expected, of course, that optimum farm practices will be adopted, particularly by Bedouin settlers. It is possible, however, to provide guidance and even, perhaps, to prescribe certain crop rotations. In the dry-farming communities wheat will obviously be the principal crop, but winter vetch and such legumes as lentils, chick peas and soya beans should also be part of the cropping scheme. From 5 to 10 hectares might be left fallow each year. Another 5-10 hectares of each farmer's allotment might well be put into approved pasture. Each settler should be provided with about 60 sheep which should give a return nearly equal to that derived from crops. For the irrigated areas much more intensive cultivation, with a minimum of fallow, should of course be envisaged. The emphasis should be on such summer crops as cotton, sugar beets, peanuts, maize, beans and vegetables grown in proper rotation. Here the use of fertilizers and insecticides will have to be especially encouraged. A few cattle should be kept on the basis of the fodder provided by some of the suggested crops.

Each settlement should be small enough so that the remotest farm would be no farther than an hour's walk from the village, and large enough to warrant the establishment of minimum community services such as a well, a mosque or church, a school and a community center. The first consideration is important only in determining the size of a dry-farming settlement and would point to a settlement with an area no larger than about 5,500 hectares. On such a dry-farming area 120 families, including 10 non-farming families, could be settled initially; and the total might ultimately be about double if the land first held in reserve as pasture were subsequently allocated to new families. Even a settlement of 120 families, with a total population of 600-720, could support minimum community facilities. For the irrigated areas, where land allotments would

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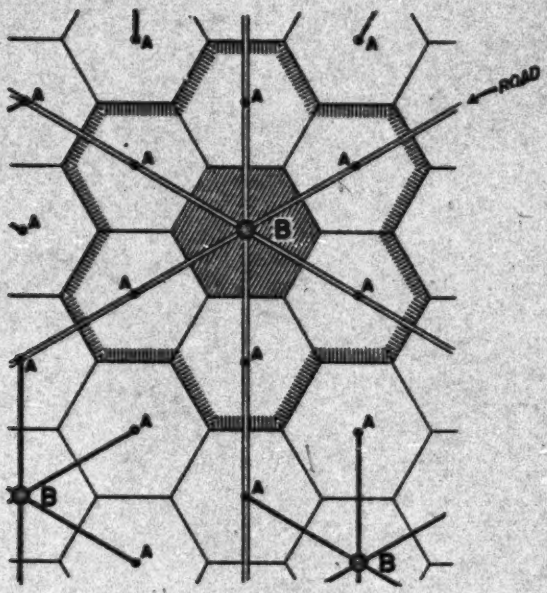
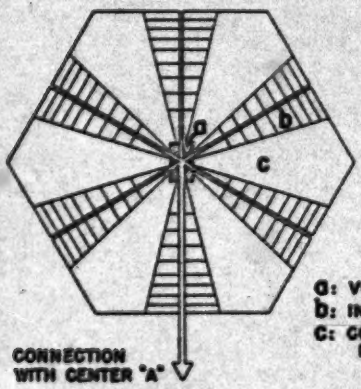


DIAGRAM 1
SCHEMATIC RELATIONSHIP OF DRY-FARMING COMMUNITIES



a: VILLAGE
b: INDIVIDUAL FARMS
c: COMMUNITY LAND FOR GRAZING

DIAGRAM 2
LAYOUT OF COMMUNITY "B"
(20 Hectare Farms)

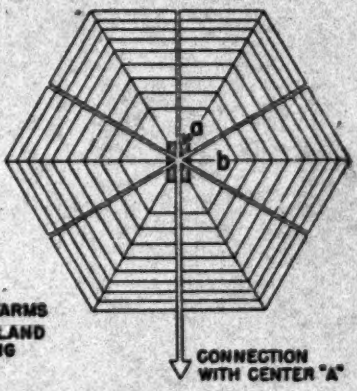


DIAGRAM 3
LAYOUT OF COMMUNITY "B"
(50 Hectare Farms)

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423 be much smaller, the minimum size of a community might be raised to
166 around 300 families, including some 30 non-farming families. Such a larger
241 community would economize capital invested in common services. Even
361 on irrigated land, however, circumstances might dictate the establishment of a smaller community with a provision for subsequent growth if the potentialities of the land warrant it.

A settlement should be laid out in such a way as to make access to farm land convenient and to fit into adjoining settlements of a similar type. For the dry-farming area settlement units shaped like hexagons would in principle be ideal. (See Diagrams 1-3.) In such a unit the farms could be laid out at an angle to six roads radiating from the center and parallel to the sides of the hexagon. Between the farms radiating from the roads the land initially reserved as common pasture would be located. One of the six roads would link the settlement with other communities. A number of hexagonal settlements would fit well together. It must be recognized, however, that modifications in this basic hexagonal unit will often be necessary, owing to marked variations in the quality of the soil or the topography, the relationship of the area to existing settlements and other factors. (For examples, see Diagrams 4-6.) In the irrigated regions the shape of the settlement will be largely determined by the layout of the irrigation system, so that the hexagon may well have to yield to the square as the more practical form.

In areas where a number of settlements are established the relationship of the new communities to each other and to existing settlements in adjoining areas must be carefully considered. For the Roudj, for example, the mission would suggest the establishment of about five communities, of which four would be purely agricultural and one would serve also as a minor marketing and administrative center and therefore be somewhat larger. (See Map 6.) A major center need not be envisaged in view of the proximity of the towns of Idlib and Jisr ech Chogour. For the more extensive region of the Ghab a similiar pattern can be contemplated; and the planning will need to be based on the assumption that Jisr ech Chogour, situated at the northern end of the area, will become the regional marketing and administrative center.

The mission strongly recommends the village-type of settlement. Any other type which would house the settlers on their own farms would not only be contrary to tradition, but would be destructive of community life and make it difficult to supply the needed community services. The village

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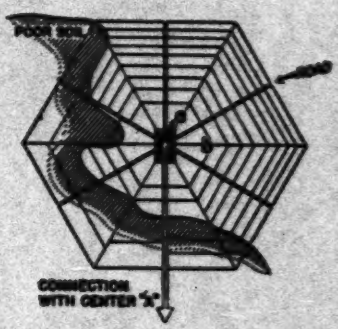

DIAGRAM 4
ALTERATION OF FARM DIVISIONS IN THE CASE OF VARIATIONS IN THE QUALITIES OF SOIL

a: VILLAGE
b: INDIVIDUAL FARMING
c: IRRIGATED AREA

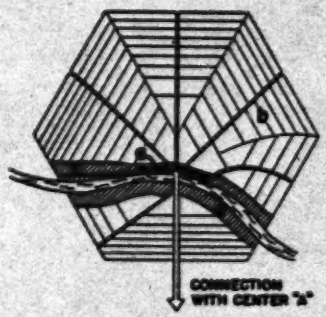

DIAGRAM 5
LAYOUT OF COMMUNITY WITH STREAM

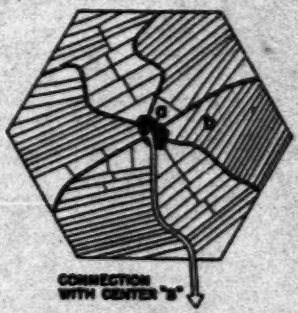

DIAGRAM 6
LAYOUT OF COMMUNITY WITH DIFFERENT TOPOGRAPHIC CONTOURS

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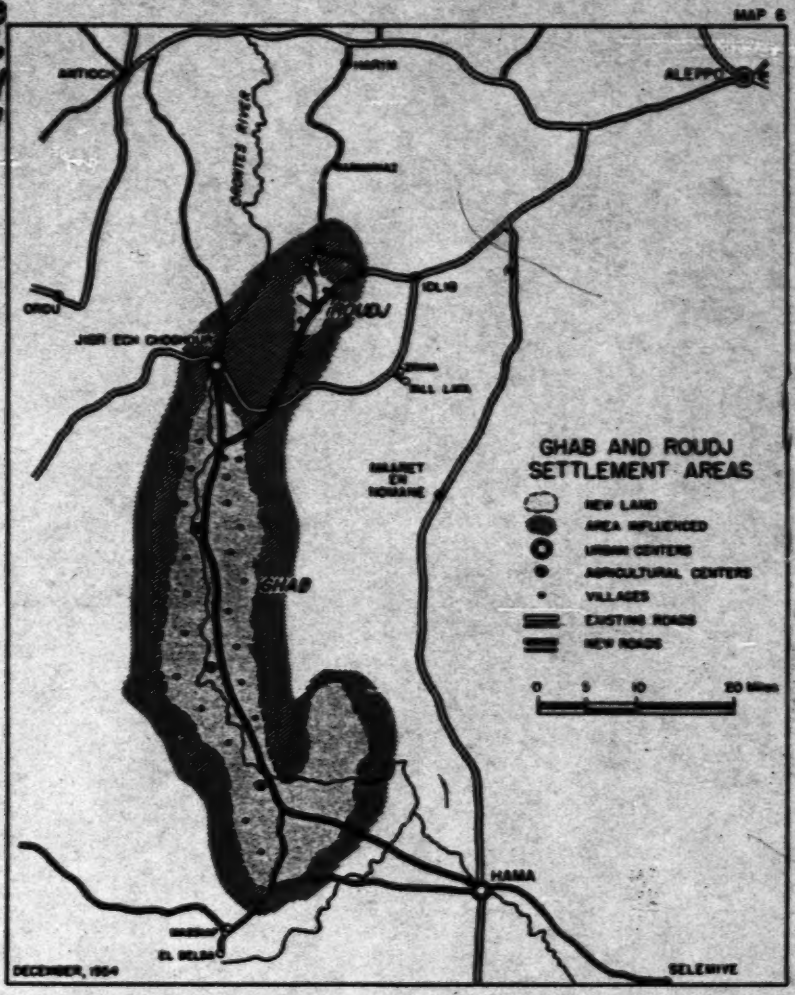

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should be located in the center of the settlement area and laid out along a rectangular pattern with the community facilities and open public places in the middle. It would be desirable to have the village surrounded by a small garden area and a belt of trees.

The settlement must, of course, be considered "model", but not in the sense that its standards and costs are so high as to render its general adoption prohibitively expensive. The settlers should be expected to contribute their own labor to its initial construction and the subsequent gradual expansion and improvement of its facilities. This will help to reduce costs and give the settlers a sense of pride and achievement in the establishment of the community. For example, the ultimate aim might be to provide a farm family with a 5-room house (3 main rooms, kitchen and laundry-lavatory), enclosed courtyard, storehouse and stables.[10] Initially, however, it would suffice to provide a 2-room unit without some of the elements in the final building. The cost could thus be kept to about £S 1,500, to which the settler might contribute £S 800 in the form of properly supervised self-help. Each farm family will need, however, a minimum sustenance allowance of approximately £S 1,000 to tide it over the first year when the community is in the course of construction and little is produced. Such an allowance should be paid out in the form of compensation for labor services provided by the settlers.

The mission has estimated the cash investment outlay in the different types of settlements as follows (in Syrian pounds):

	Dry farming settlement (120 families)		Irrigated area settlement (310 families)
	Non-mechanized	Mechanized	
Housing for farm families	77,000	77,000	191,100
Housing and shops for non-farm families	20,000	20,000	67,000
Community facilities[a]	71,000	71,000	182,000
Draft power, livestock and implements	318,000	514,000[b]	341,250
Sustenance allowance	110,000	110,000	273,000
Total	596,000	792,000	1,054,350

[a] Including schools, mosques (or churches), community centers, water supply and roads.
[b] Including £S 250,000 for mechanized equipment.

[10] See Annex I, p. 468.

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The mission suggests that the state Agricultural Bank finance the housing and means of production (other than mechanized equipment) under loans to be amortized over a 10-year and three- to four-year period respectively. The government itself should be responsible for providing the funds necessary for community facilities, mechanized equipment and payment of the sustenance allowance.

The mission's calculations indicate that the average farm family should be able to earn a net annual income of around £S 2,000 in the dry-farming communities and of over £S 3,000 in the irrigated-area communities even during the period when loans are being repaid. This should leave a small margin for the payment for land in the dry-farming areas and a substantial margin for the necessary payments for land and water in the irrigated areas. The mission believes it a sound principle to require some payment even for non-irrigated state domain. The price of land, however, should be such that the settler can expect to become a full owner within a reasonable period, e.g., no more than 10 to 15 years.

Certain conditions will need to be enforced in settling peasants on the land. For example, title should not be transferred until all payments have been completed, and in the intervening period the government should reserve the right to remove settlers who prove to be clearly unsuitable or do not till their own land. Even after title has been transferred, the government might well retain for a specified period the right to veto all proposed sales, mortgages or leases, in order to safeguard the fundamental objective of establishing and maintaining independent peasant proprietors.

During the next five years the government will have to undertake the settlement of the Roudj and a portion of the Ghab. For the settlement of Bedouins the mission recommends the establishment of two experimental dry-farming communities, one of which would be mechanized, in the Jezireh. The mission must emphasize, however, that the latter two experiments are bound to fail unless the government allocates to them good land situated in a region with adequate rainfall. Both the Roudj and the Jezireh projects will provide much valuable experience useful in extending the settlement effort. In addition the government might well undertake one project in the Djebel es Smaane northwest of Aleppo and another in the Djebel Druze. The ruins of many once imposing cities testify that the first region flourished from the first to the seventh century of the Christian era, and recent evidence indicates that this prosperity was primarily founded on orchards and vineyards. More recently people have been

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returning to become squatters among the ruins and cultivate patches of stony but fertile soil. Organization of this rather haphazard settlement and the establishment of a planned community based again on orchards and vineyards may prove a worthwhile undertaking. In the Djebel Druze, where living standards are low and emigration is difficult for religious reasons, a similar settlement should be tried, provided a suitable tract of land can be found. Here, too, conditions are favorable for the establishment of orchards and vineyards.

At present responsibility for settlement is dispersed. The Ghab Administration is entrusted with settlement in the Ghab; the Irrigation Service has the task in other newly reclaimed and irrigated areas; and the Ministry of Agriculture has the initiative for the dry-farming areas. The mission strongly recommends that responsibility for planning and coordinating all the work be vested in a single, independent Settlements Administration, which would also discharge certain governmental functions relating to housing, town planning and similar subjects. The settlement program will require a great organizational effort and a staff which only a single agency would be capable of mobilizing. One administration is also much more likely to apply the experience gained in the initial settlement work to subsequent ventures. The mission urges that such an agency be established promptly, so that the necessary planning may be immediately initiated. The assistance of a number of foreign experts will need to be enlisted to carry out the program.

If the four settlements the mission has recommended are established and the Roudj and a portion of the Ghab are settled, the total cost would probably be around £S 10 million. Under the mission's proposals, £S 5.5 million would be financed by the Agricultural Bank, and the balance met directly by the government. With these funds it should be possible to settle some 2,300 families or between 12,000 and 14,000 people.

Land Reform

While the settlement of state domain may gradually increase the number of peasant proprietors, Syria will also have to work out policies relating to land ownership and tenancy in the areas already under cultivation. In this connection it should be noted that Article 22 of the 1950 constitution calls for legislation to determine, without retroactive effect, "the maximum area of land that may be owned, exploited and disposed of, according to

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Economic Benefits

The mission estimates that the gross value of the produce of the Ghab area will be in the neighborhood of £S 63 million annually, or about £S 47 million after deducting the amount already produced in the area in question. The production of cotton, maize, sorghum, rice and sugar beets is particularly likely to have a marked impact on Syria's balance of trade. It may be assumed that the output of cotton and cottonseed will in effect be added to the country's exportable surplus; the additional rice production may make Syria fully self-sufficient in that commodity; and the sugar beet production should permit a considerable import saving.

In addition to the project's contribution to an increase in national income and an improvement in the balance of payments, the settlement of farmers in the area made possible by the project will assist in relieving the present population pressure in the province of Latakia and particularly in the Alaouit mountains. In Latakia, for example, the amount of cultivated land available per person is less than 50% of the average for Syria as a whole. Settlers in the Ghab will be able to earn substantially more than the bare living they have been able to eke from the soil in the past.

Organization

The "Administrative Office of the Drainage and Irrigation Works of the Ghab Lands" was created in 1951, to be attached to the Ministry of Public Works until the technical work is completed. It will be responsible for the design of the works, award of contracts, supervision of construction, payment of expenses and for sale of the land. As parts of the project are completed, the Office will take care of the operation and maintenance of the dams and of the irrigation and drainage networks and will collect water charges. During the planning and construction period the Office should recruit and train staff to carry out the continuing operation and management of the project.

It is important that the policy, and the attendant operating and budget delegations, provide for the establishment and operation of the agricultural research centers and for a long-range educational and farm demonstration program; otherwise, it will be practically impossible to achieve acceptable land use in the area.

14:International Bank S-5 (1954) 1955 MD1 Syria MD1

v INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS

The Need for Further Industrialization

It is generally agreed—and the mission shares this opinion—that with a more rational distribution and better cultivation of the available land, and particularly with a gradual extension of the irrigated area, Syrian agriculture could for a considerable time to come easily absorb the expected natural population increase. With respect to the need for further industrialization, however, the relevant considerations seem rather to be the territorial and occupational distribution of the population and the evolution of this pattern. The principal question is whether—and if so, to what degree and in which direction—Syrian industry needs further expansion to absorb the present and immediately foreseeable effective labor supply.

Although reliable figures are not available there is no clear evidence that Syria is suffering from chronic unemployment. There are, however, some very overpopulated rural areas with considerable underemployment and there is a continuous flow of labor from the villages to the urban centers. During the postwar period of considerable building activity and rapid industrialization, these markets were able to absorb the increased labor supply. But at times, as for instance in 1948 in Aleppo, the urban workers have become alarmed by the influx of villagers competing with them and aggravating already existing unemployment, particularly in the textile industry. There were demonstrations and a request to the local authorities to bar villagers from applying for town employment; this in turn induced the government to encourage certain village industries—the decline of which is again contributing to urban labor pressure.

This illustrates the tensions which are bound to arise as a consequence of the existing imbalance between rural-urban social and economic conditions. Unless the village standard of living is greatly improved, there is little doubt that the trend toward the towns will continue strong and that the numbers seeking employment in industry will greatly exceed the natural increase in the industrial population. This tendency may even become more pronounced when, as is to be anticipated, illiteracy in the villages declines, transport and communications improve and the rural population becomes more aware of its poverty and social insecurity.

14:International Bank S-5(1954)1955 MD1 Syria MD1

The recommendations of the mission with regard to agriculture and animal husbandry, including those concerning land tenure and irrigation, would, if accepted, open significant new perspectives to the farmer and farm laborers and tend to check the drift from rural areas. It is also possible to spend more on irrigation than has been recommended, the trend could perhaps be reversed. It is not likely, however, that the growing labor supply can be absorbed and unemployment avoided without further industrialization. Even on the highly optimistic assumption that migration towards the towns can be halted, Syria must contend with such factors as the natural increase in the industrial labor population and the gradual shift from handicraft to mechanization with the consequent release of manpower.

Although estimates in this field are particularly hazardous, the mission suggests that under the most favorable circumstances Syria will have to create at least 20,000-25,000 new industrial jobs during the next six years to keep its industrial labor market in reasonable balance.

Limiting Factors

It is often contended in Syrian official and business circles that shortage of local capital rather than lack of confidence is the principal factor limiting further industrialization. Assuming that this is so, it would follow that to advance development Syria should make a strenuous effort to create attractive conditions for foreign capital as a supplementary source of industrial financing. This conclusion does not seem to be generally acknowledged. At least the nationalization of foreign-owned public utilities without settling the matter of indemnification of their proprietors, and the regulations with respect to foreign companies working in Syria, do not indicate its acceptance.

There is, however, room for some doubt whether scarcity of capital should be considered as a major factor limiting development of Syrian industry. During the past eight years, investments in industry have supplied the country with an industrial capacity capable of meeting most of the need for manufactured articles, based on local primary production, which the population can afford; indeed, as already pointed out, in several branches of industry there is excess capacity. Generally speaking, Syrian industry appears to have attracted substantial amounts of capital. Even taking into account the fact that the sources of industrial investment

15: Khadduri S-4 (no date) 1951 MDl Syria MDl

Arab heritages, equipped with knowledge, aware of its duties and obligations, working for the general welfare, imbued with the spirit of collaboration and fraternity among all citizens." (Article 28.) To achieve these ends the State undertakes to supervise all educational institutions in the country and to formulate programs to be applied in the various stages of training. The State alone has the right to grant and to standardize school certificates. Further, a Board of Education is to be set up to formulate educational policy and plans, the composition and functions of which are to be defined by law.

Military service is compulsory, the justification being that the defense of the country is a "sacred duty" and that the Army is the guardian of the Fatherland. The family is the basis of society and is to be protected by the State. The State protects and encourages marriage and endeavors to remove the material and social obstacles which hinder it.

The transitional provisions of the Constitution specify that within ten years from its coming into force illiteracy must be eliminated from the country. Another provision relates to the formulation of a plan for the gradual settlement of the tribes.

Finally, the Constitution stipulates that no amendment is to be made for two years. Thereafter the Constitution may be amended either by a proposal from the President with the approval of the Cabinet and Parliament if one-third of its members submit an application to this effect. Parliament will then consider the proposed amendment; if approved by an absolute majority, it is considered approved as a motion. If it is rejected, the rejection is final and no application for the amendment of the same article can be submitted again for one year. Six months after the adoption of a motion in favor of amendment, Parliament can begin to discuss the proposed alteration. A two-thirds majority is required for approval.

APPRAISAL

The Syrian Constitution of 1950 clearly reflects the influence of both the new European constitutions and the recent course of Arab nationalism. The socialistic trends reflect a realization of the need of rebuilding the social-economic system, which had

15: Tannous N.G-5 (no date) 1951 M1 Middle East M1
Egypt MR1
Syria MD1
Saudi Arabia MJ1

About two years ago the Government of Saudi Arabia proclaimed its readiness to grant state land to any citizen who undertakes to put it under cultivation. This policy was developed on the basis of the Koranic statement to the effect that land belongs to the one who revives it. It must be remarked in this connection that the religion of Islam is basically for the equitable distribution and utilization of the land resource. Saudi Arabia is an Orthodox Muslim country, regulating its life in accordance with the religious law. This opens the possibility for the development of a form of ownership that is at the same time Islamic and effective.

In the summer of 1949 Col. Husni Za'im of Syria was liquidated through a coup d'état, but not so the reforms he had initiated. The idea of reforming the land tenure system has been kept alive. The government that followed that of Za'im created a committee representing various agencies to study the problem and recommend possible solutions. This activity bore fruit in the form of Article 22 in the new Syrian constitution, which provides, among other things, for (a) encouragement of small and medium land holdings; (b) setting a maximum limit to the size of holdings, but not retroactively; (c) making it obligatory upon the owner to keep his land under cultivation, otherwise he would lose his claim over it; and (d) distributing state land among landless peasants. There are also indications that the present government intends to take effective action in this respect. There is already a plan for the resettlement of peasants on state land in the Homs-Hama areas.

A promising sign in Egypt is the consciousness of the problem that is now shared by government officials and by people in various walks of life, including the peasants themselves. This consciousness has developed as a result of a rapid increase in population, bringing about a tremendous pressure upon the land resource. As mentioned above, this resource is highly concentrated in the hands of the very few, including the state. The landless or near-landless peasant desires strongly a few acres of the coveted precious land.

In response to this tense situation, Egyptian leadership is beginning to take some action. In some cases the government has

25: Wartime 5-5 (no date) 1948 MI Middle East
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irrigated land, and village chiefs can frequently be bribed to leave open irrigation ditches so that their land is better watered. This frequently happens, for example, in the Ghuta of Damascus, where there is no unified plan for the irrigation of the district and no authority which can enforce the customary rights.

2. The system under which water is owned collectively, or as *Waqf*, in the northern Beqa.

3. Private ownership by large landowners. This is usual in the Lebanon where there are a number of small private schemes.

These methods of control apply to the smaller schemes. Large-scale schemes have been operated either by:

1. Private concession. Only one relatively large-scale concession is actually in operation, the Nahr Ibrahim (Adonis) scheme.
2. The State. State-controlled works have been carried out by
   (i) authorities directly under the control of the French authorities;
   (ii) authorities directly under the control of the Lebanese Public Works Ministry;
   (iii) Lebanese or Syrian authorities under the control of the Délégation Générale.

There is great need of a central authority to co-ordinate the supply of water. In the south Beqa, for instance, much irrigable land is left unirrigated and much water allowed to run to waste for lack of such an authority.

State Land. One of the main reasons for the lack of intensive cultivation in central Syria is that the State lands have never been systematically settled. Very large areas are State domain, that is, land registered as the property of the Turkish Sultan, Abdul Hamid. Under the mandate, this land became the property of the local government. Under the Turks these lands were used for the 'displaced persons' of the old Empire, who were driven out when Turkish territory was lost, but they were still sparsely settled when the French took over.

After the rising of 1925 the French authorities began to settle

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the land. In 1926–31, 182 villages comprising 181,000 hectares were colonized in small properties by 6,000 families. The Government of Latakia compelled large proprietors in the region of Homs to give up their villages in the district of Masyaf in 1929; the land was distributed among the occupying peasants and sold to them at a price to be paid for in ten annual instalments. The village of Jib Ramle was also settled in 1929, in part by occupying peasants, in part by refugee Armenians.

But the French administration did not complete the settlement of these areas. In some regions the Turks settled these lands with nomad tribes, who were themselves averse to cultivation and either rented the land to Alawi villagers or continued to live themselves as nomads on the land without cultivating much of it. Consequently this land is now very sparsely settled. Round Homs there are said to be 2,000 to 4,000 hectares with only 10 per cent of the land cultivated: this is some of the most fertile and best situated land in the country, and could be developed by colonization schemes.

In several respects the French authorities have modified the Turkish system in ways which strengthen the landowners against the cultivators. One of these was the sale of the extensive *Waqf* properties to business enterprises, irrigation concessions, or landowners. Another was the abrogation of the right of ownership acquired by ten years cultivation which benefited the small cultivators in enabling them to acquire new land.

Efforts were made to start co-operative and agricultural credit banks, but these never succeeded in breaking the peasant's indebtedness. Several large-scale irrigation schemes were started, but produced more water than could be used. The educational system did not extend to the villages. Within the framework of the existing system, these reforms did little to raise the standard of the peasants. As a mandatory Power the French relied on the collaboration of the wealthy upper class, that is, on the landowners, and so could make no fundamental reforms in the land system.

POSSIBILITIES OF DEVELOPMENT

So far as dry land farming is concerned the possibilities of improvement are hampered by the dry summer, which necessitates a long period of fallow. However, it would be possible by

29:Dunn S-4 (1952)1952 MI Middle East
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ment, and the investors, inexperienced in farming and unequipped to deal with adverse weather, lack of water, and heavy insect infestation, obtained low yields. Many lost their own capital and borrowed money. 454 241

Some investors, who realize that their only chance of coming out on their original investment is to continue their operations and even to make additional investments, plan to expand operations. Future investment naturally will depend on current earnings which will be determined by production and world market prices.

Farmers who may be in a position to continue investing in agricultural development out of their own capital, however, will be a small minority. The need for credit will be great.

Limited credit usually is given to tenants by the landlords during the spring and summer, but most farmers need more. In the past, additional production credit has been extended largely by the merchants and moneylenders at rates from 15 to 50 per cent annually. A few large landlords borrow money from banks at rates as low as 7 and 8 per cent, but only against excellent securities. Interest rates to the tenants who have less collateral are usually higher. Merchants are discontinuing the practice of buying cotton before the crop is made at prices from 50 to 70 per cent of the future market price because in many cases the farmers do not make enough cotton to fulfill their contract. 452 426 [455]

The government has sought to meet the need for credit by creating an agricultural bank, but the capital is limited and size and volume of loans are small. In 1951, for instance, the bank loaned a total of only $5 million to 57,000 cultivators. Private groups are said to have loaned as much on cotton in the Jezira alone. 652 452

LAND TENURE

Land available for cultivation is plentiful, but confused titles, excessive concentration of ownership, and insufficient or restricted use of the state domains hamper development. 423

The government has a major interest in agriculture and the tenure problem. The Ministry of Justice reports that 23 per cent of the farm land is owned by the state and in some of the larger farming areas the percentage runs as high as 69 per cent. There is also a heavy concentration of land in large units owned and operated by a few wealthy landlords, with 29 per cent of the farm land in farms over 250 acres. Most of the large farms in the old agricultural areas are operated on a tenancy system, but many of the farms now being established in the new areas of the Jezira are operated on a day-wage basis with mechanical equipment. This is especially true of wheat farms. A strong middle class of farmers owns about one-third of the land in farms from 25 to 250 acres, and many of them cultivate their land with the help of tenants. Only 15 per cent of the farm land is owned in lots less than 25 acres. 423 471 241 [427] [464]

In an effort to encourage landownership, stability of tenure, and an interest in improvement of the land, a law was passed recently under which state lands are to be sold on long-term, easy-payment plans to landless farmers with a limit of 123 acres to a farmer. The plan was designed especially to settle the nomads. The principal areas concerned are the state domains in the valleys of the Euphrates and Kabur Rivers, which were un- 425 471 311 [166]

63:Simmons et al G-5 (1941-1951) 1954
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of agriculture are the present forms of land tenure. The proportion of large- and small-scale proprietors is not accurately known, but at least one half of the total farm acreage is owned by wealthy, and often absentee, landlords, and worked according to the share-tenancy system. In many northern districts, particularly in Latakia and Al Jazira provinces, the proportion is probably closer to 70 to 80 per cent. Communal ownership by tribes or villages is also common in some areas. The constitution of Syria provides for the creation of a landowning peasantry through the redistribution and the sale of state lands, but as yet the percentage of independent farmers is relatively small. Many tenant families and agricultural laborers live at subsistence levels under conditions of extreme poverty. Within recent years attempts have been made to encourage the settlement of the Bedouin tribes. Some now live in permanent villages, where they combine cultivation of cereals with the raising of sheep, migrating seasonally with their flocks in search of pasturage.

Wheat is the principal crop. Barley, maize and other cereals are also grown, especially in the areas of Homs, Hama, Hauran and Al Jazira. Olives, fruits and vegetables are important products on the oasis around Damascus and in the coastal region. Cotton is cultivated in Latakia, Aleppo and Al Jazira provinces, while tobacco flourishes in some sections of Latakia. Other industrial crops include sugar cane, sugar beets, sesame, castor oil beans and hemp. Sheep and goats are abundant in all parts of the country, but cattle are found chiefly in the coastal highlands, on the Damascus oasis and in the Hauran region in the southwest. Limited programs for the improvement of methods of farming and animal husbandry are undertaken by the veterinary and the agricultural services of the government. Four agricultural schools are operated by the Ministry of Agriculture—near Latakia, Hama, Aleppo and Damascus. In the Damascus region, the Near East Foundation